DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 421 932 HE 031 454

TITLE	National Institutional Priorities Report, 1997.
INSTITUTION	USA Group Noel-Levitz, Iowa City, IA.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	9p.; For related document, see HE 031 453.
AVAILABLE FROM	USA Group Noel-Levitz, 2101 Act Circle, Iowa City, IA 52245; phone: 319-337-4700; fax: 319-337-5274 (free).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrator Attitudes; College Admission; *College Students; Community Colleges; Cultural Pluralism; *Educational Environment; Higher Education; *Institutional Evaluation; Instructional Effectiveness; Organizational Effectiveness; Private Colleges; Public Colleges; Questionnaires; School Guidance; School Safety; *Self Evaluation (Groups); *Student Attitudes; *Student College Relationship; Student Interests; Student Personnel Services; Student Surveys; Teacher Attitudes; Technical Institutes; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	Student Satisfaction

ABSTRACT

This document reports on a study that gathered information about how colleges and universities view their effectiveness in meeting the expectations of their students. By quantifying the importance that faculty, staff, and administrators place on student expectations, the institution is able to pinpoint its strengths and to assign priorities for action. Data were collected for this pilot Institutional Priorities Survey from 80 colleges and universities on how their faculty, administration, staff, and board members rated over 50 elements of the college experience. The survey asked subjects to rate statements, on a scale of 1-7, that measured their views of the level of importance of student expectations and the level of satisfaction with various elements of student experiences and expectations. Findings are presented as three scores for each item: an importance score, a satisfaction score, and a performance gap score calculated by subtracting the satisfaction score from the importance score. Responses for each score item were calculated for each of the three types of institution included in the study: four-year public; four-year private; and community, junior, and technical colleges. Sample survey items are included. (MAB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 421 932

1997 National Institutional Priorities Report

Noel-Levitz National Center for Student Retention

Introduction

Studies of institutional priorities are self-examinations that enable institutions to measure their effectiveness in meeting the expectations of their students. Taking a "sounding" of *all* campus constituents, including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and board members, enables the institution to pinpoint more precisely those areas where improvements in campus programs and services can impact the level of student satisfaction.

Assessment of Institutional Priorities

Colleges and universities generally rely on measures of student satisfaction alone to determine their priorities for intervention. However, greater precision can be realized by viewing satisfaction within the context of *both* student expectations and the value campus personnel place on these expectations. By quantifying the importance faculty, staff and administrators place on student expectations, as well as their perceptions of student satisfaction, campus leaders are able to pinpoint their strengths and priorities for action.

The Study

USA Group Noel-Levitz invited institutions already utilizing the Student Satisfaction Inventory™ to participate in the pilot study for the Institutional Priorities Survey™. Eighty campuses across North America participated, ranging from large four-year public universities to small liberal arts colleges to two-year community and technical colleges.

The Source of Data

The 1997 National Institutional Priorities Report represents data from 80 colleges and universities from four-year public, four-year private, two-year community, junior and technical institutions that utilized the Institutional Priorities Survey with all or part of their faculty, administration, staff, and board members during the spring of 1997. The personnel populations by institutional type include 2,125 from the four-year publics; 2,962 from the four-year privates; and 2,671 from the two-year community, junior and technical colleges.

The Instrument

The Institutional Priorities Survey, from which the data were collected for this report, consists of over 50 items that cover the full range of college experiences. These items are directly parallel to the items on the Student Satisfaction Inventory. Each item is expressed as a statement of expectation. Each statement includes a rating scale of 1 to 7 where campus personnel are asked to rate the level of importance they believe the institution assigns to the expectation as well as their level of agreement that the expectation is being met.

Similar to the SSI, the inventory findings are then presented with three scores for each item: an importance score, an agreement score, and a performance gap score, which is calculated by subtracting the agreement score from the importance score. A large performance gap score on an item indicates that the institution is not meeting the expectation; a small gap score indicates that the institution is close to meeting the expectation; and a negative gap score indicates that the institution is exceeding the expectation.

Two versions of the IPS are available: the Community, Junior and Technical College version and the Four-Year College and University version. Each version captures the unique features of the type of institution for which it was developed. A sample of the IPS items representing a broad array of issues relating to campus programs and services is presented at the end of this report.

LA 54
1AE 031

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
USA Group
Noel-Levitz, Inc.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

© 1997, USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc.

Expectations Deemed Most Important

Faculty, administration, and staff were asked to rate the level of importance of each statement of expectation by responding to the question **"How important is it that the institution meet this expectation?"** Responses reflect how strongly personnel felt about the expectation, with higher scores reflecting greater expectations. The statements of expectation rated as most important by campus personnel were as follows:

Expectations Deemed Most Important by Campus Personnel

Four-Year Private Institutions

1. The instruction in major fields is excellent.
2. Nearly all faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
3. The campus is safe and secure for all students.
4. The quality of instruction in most classes is excellent.
5. Faculty care about students as individuals.

Four-Year Public Institutions

1. The campus is safe and secure for all students.
2. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field.
3. The instruction in major fields is excellent.
4. The quality of instruction in most classes is excellent.
5. Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.

Community, Junior and Technical Colleges

1. The quality of instruction in most of classes is excellent.
2. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
3. Academic advisors are knowledgeable about program requirements.
4. The campus is safe and secure for all students.
5. The quality of instruction in the vocational/technical programs is excellent.

Expectations Reflecting Highest Level of Agreement

Faculty, administration, and staff were asked to rate their level of agreement that the institution is meeting each student expectation by responding to the question **"What is your level of agreement that the institution is meeting this expectation?"** Responses reflected the degree to which campus personnel felt their institution was meeting the expectation, with higher scores reflecting greater levels of agreement of expectations being met. Those items with the highest scores are as follows:

Expectations With Highest Agreement

Four-Year Private Institutions

1. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
2. Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.
3. Students are able to experience intellectual growth here.
4. This institution has a good reputation within the community.
5. Students can easily get involved in campus organizations.

Four-Year Public Institutions

1. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
2. Library staff are helpful and approachable.
3. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
4. On the whole, the campus is well maintained.
5. Students are able to experience intellectual growth here.

Community, Junior and Technical Colleges

1. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
2. Students are able to experience intellectual growth here.
3. This institution has a good reputation within the community.
4. Library staff are helpful and approachable.
5. Tutoring services are readily available.

 © 1997, USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc.

Unmet Expectations

Performance gap takes into consideration both the importance score and the agreement score by generating a discrepancy score. When the level of agreement (*agreement score*) is subtracted from the strength of the expectation (*importance score*), the result is a performance gap (*unmet expectation*). A large performance gap score for an item indicates that the institution is not meeting this student expectation. A negative gap score indicates that an institution is exceeding expectations for that item.

Listed below are the statements of expectation with the largest performance gaps as rated by faculty, administration, and staff in the national sample of 80 institutions. In addition, the importance scores and the corresponding agreement scores are presented below the statements to illustrate the merit of a two-dimensional approach to studying this type of data. *Note:* Performance gaps should be considered within the context of importance scores.

Expectations With Greatest Performance Gaps

Four-Year Private Institutions

1. Students seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus. *(importance 6.37 - agreement 4.48)*
2. Library resources are adequate. *(importance 6.44 - agreement 4.67)*
3. Students are able to register for classes they need with few conflicts. *(importance 6.30 - agreement 4.58)*
4. Computer labs are adequate and accessible. *(importance 6.45 - agreement 4.77)*
5. Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning. *(importance 6.55 - agreement 4.99)*

Four-Year Public Institutions

1. Students seldom get the "run-around" when seeking information on this campus. *(importance 6.37 - agreement 4.00)*
2. Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning. *(importance 6.48 - agreement 4.40)*
3. Students are able to register for classes they need with few conflicts. *(importance 6.29 - agreement 4.48)*
4. Adequate financial aid is available for most students. *(importance 6.28 - agreement 4.52)*
5. Financial aid counselors are helpful. *(importance 6.53 - agreement 4.81)*

Community, Junior and Technical Colleges

1. Students seldom get the "run around" when seeking information on this campus. *(importance 6.38 - agreement 4.54)*
2. The amount of student parking on campus is adequate. *(importance 6.15 - agreement 4.50)*
3. The equipment in the lab facilities is kept up to date. *(importance 6.48 - agreement 4.90)*
4. People on this campus respect and are supportive of each other. *(importance 6.29 - agreement 4.73)*
5. Financial aid awards are announced to students in time to be helpful in college planning. *(importance 6.30 - agreement 4.75)*

The Scales

Findings from the Institutional Priorities Survey are compared to national standards on composite scales by institutional type in the following areas.

- **Academic Advising Effectiveness** *(four-year version)* **and Academic Advising and Counseling Effectiveness** *(community, junior and technical college version)* assess the comprehensiveness of the academic advising program, evaluating advisors' knowledge, competence, approachability, and personal concern for students.
- **Academic Services** *(community, junior and technical college version)* assesses services students utilize to achieve their academic goals. These services include the library, computer labs, tutoring, and study areas.
- **Campus Climate** measures the extent to which the institution provides experiences that promote a sense of campus pride and belonging.
- **Campus Life** *(four-year version)* assesses the effectiveness of student life programs offered by the institution, covering issues ranging from athletics to residence life. This scale also assesses campus policies and procedures to determine perceptions of students' rights and responsibilities.
- **Campus Support Services** assesses the quality of support programs and services.

© 1997, USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc.

- **Concern for the Individual** assesses your commitment to treating each student as an individual. Included in this assessment are those groups who frequently deal with students on a personal level (e.g., faculty, advisors, counselors, residence hall staff).
- **Instructional Effectiveness** assesses students' academic experience, the curriculum, and the campus's overriding commitment to academic excellence.
- **Recruitment and Financial Aid Effectiveness** *(four-year version)* **and Admissions and Financial Aid Effectiveness** *(community, junior and technical college version)* measure the extent to which admissions counselors are competent and knowledgeable, along with the perceptions of the effectiveness and availability of financial aid programs.
- **Registration Effectiveness** assesses issues associated with registration and billing and the extent to which the registration process is smooth and effective.
- **Responsiveness to Diverse Populations** assesses the institution's commitment to specific groups of students enrolled at the institution, e.g., underrepresented populations, students with disabilities, commuters, part-time students, and older, returning learners.
- **Safety and Security** measures the institution's responsiveness to students' personal safety and security on the campus.
- **Service Excellence** measures the areas of campus where quality service and personal concern for students are rated most and least favorably.
- **Student Centeredness** measures the institution's attitude toward students and the extent to which they feel welcome and valued.

Analysis of the Scales

The scales provide a more global view of the institutions by grouping items statistically and conceptually into 12 key areas. The following three tables summarize the importance, agreement, and performance gap findings for the 12 scales.

1997 Scales: *four-year private institutions*

Scale	Importance Mean	Agreement Mean	*Performance Gap Mean*
Academic Advising	6.41	5.30	*1.11*
Campus Climate	6.43	5.39	*1.04*
Campus Life	6.00	5.17	*0.83*
Campus Support Services	6.25	5.18	*1.07*
Concern for the Individual	6.53	5.56	*0.97*
Instructional Effectiveness	6.49	5.42	*1.07*
Recruitment and Financial Aid	6.48	5.18	*1.30*
Registration Effectiveness	6.20	5.12	*1.08*
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	—	4.89	—
Safety and Security	6.31	5.06	*1.25*
Service Excellence	6.30	5.31	*0.99*
Student Centeredness	6.48	5.53	*0.95*

(7 = very important /strongly agree 1 = not important / strongly disagree)

 © 1997, USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc.

1997 Scales: *four-year public institutions*

Scale	Importance Mean	Agreement Mean	*Performance Gap Mean*
Academic Advising	6.37	4.99	*1.38*
Campus Climate	6.32	5.02	*1.30*
Campus Life	5.81	4.92	*0.89*
Campus Support Services	6.21	5.11	*1.10*
Concern for the Individual	6.37	5.10	*1.27*
Instructional Effectiveness	6.45	5.16	*1.29*
Recruitment and Financial Aid	6.39	4.81	*1.58*
Registration Effectiveness	6.15	4.93	*1.22*
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	—	5.04	—
Safety and Security	6.39	4.97	*1.42*
Service Excellence	6.25	5.04	*1.21*
Student Centeredness	6.30	5.07	*1.23*

(7 = very important / strongly agree 1 = not important /strongly disagree)

1997 Scales: *community, junior and technical colleges*

Scale	Importance Mean	Agreement Mean	*Performance Gap Mean*
Academic Advising / Counseling	6.44	5.19	*1.25*
Academic Services	6.32	5.25	*1.07*
Admissions and Financial Aid	6.35	5.13	*1.22*
Campus Climate	6.34	5.19	*1.15*
Campus Support Services	5.92	4.96	*0.96*
Concern for the Individual	6.49	5.33	*1.16*
Instructional Effectiveness	6.38	5.38	*1.00*
Registration Effectiveness	6.27	5.27	*1.00*
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	—	5.50	—
Safety and Security	6.33	4.96	*1.37*
Service Excellence	6.24	5.14	*1.10*
Student Centeredness	6.33	5.30	*1.03*

(7 = very important / strongly agree 1 = not important /strongly disagree)

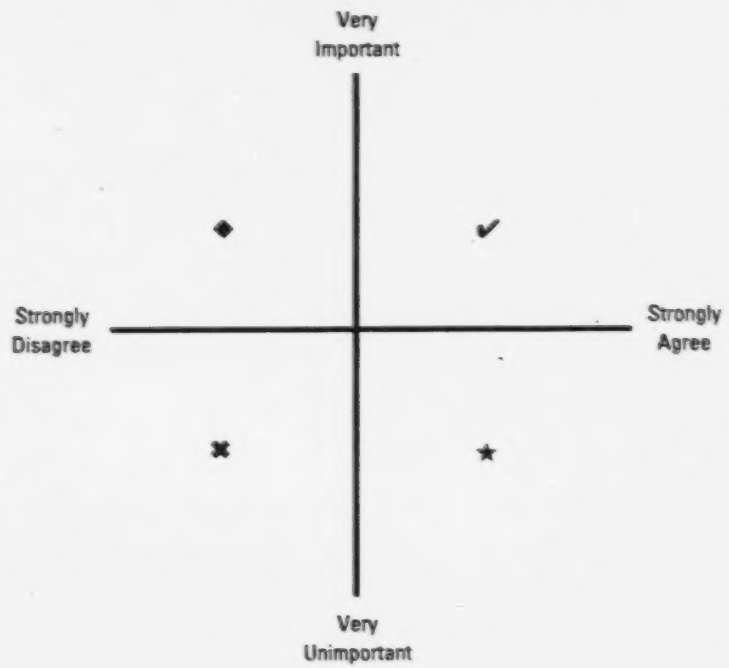
© 1997, USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc.

Analysis of the IPS Data

It is important that the identification of institutional priorities includes an assessment of the perceptions of both students and campus personnel regarding the value of campus experiences. While this study focuses on the assessment by campus personnel, it is important that institutions consider both assessments to shape their action agendas for improving the quality of the campus experience.

Using the matrix below permits the institution to conceptualize its institutional priorities data by retention priorities and marketing opportunities. (When considered in conjunction with the student satisfaction responses, it allows the institution to pinpoint areas where resources can be redirected from areas of low expectation to areas of high expectation.)

Matrix for Prioritizing Action



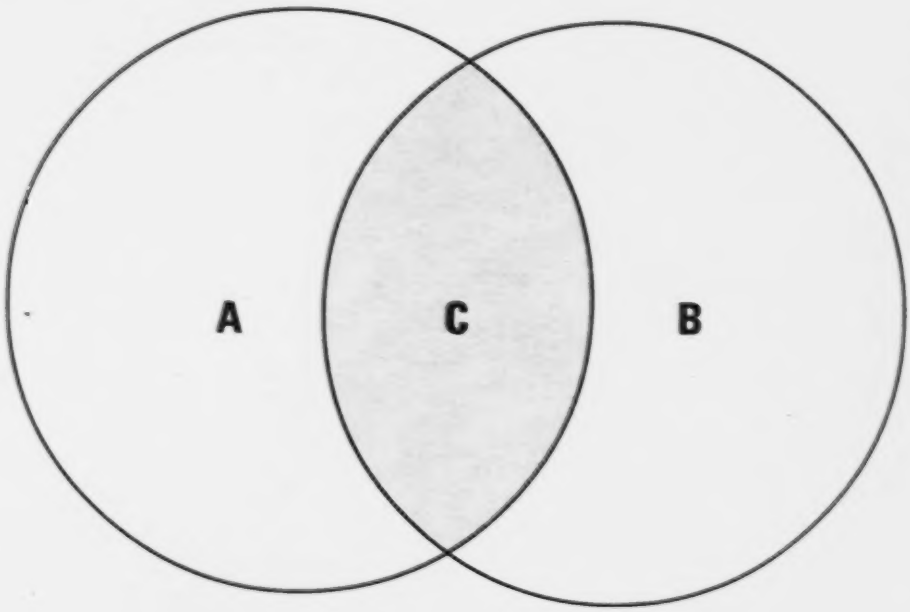
- ◆ **High importance / low agreement**
  pinpoints areas that should claim the institution's immediate attention, i.e. retention agenda/priorities
- ✔ **High importance / high agreement**
  showcases the institution's areas of strength that should be highlighted in promotional materials
- ✖ **Low importance / low agreement**
  presents an opportunity for the institution to examine those areas that have low status
- ★ **Low importance / high agreement**
  suggests areas from which it might be beneficial to redirect institutional resources to areas of higher importance

6 © 1997, USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc.

The Identification of Common Strengths and Common Priorities

Using the diagram below permits the institution to conceptualize the intersect of the student satisfaction data with the institutional priorities data. This intersect of SSI data with the IPS data allows the institution to pinpoint areas of *greatest* strength and areas of *highest* priority.

Identifying Common Strengths and Priorities



The areas of greatest institutional strength

A. Items of highest importance/highest satisfaction (student satisfaction data)

B. Items of highest importance/highest agreement (campus personnel data)

C. Intersect of A & B = areas of greatest strength

The areas of highest institutional priority

A. Items of highest importance/lowest satisfaction (student satisfaction data)

B. Items of highest importance/lowest agreement (campus personnel data)

C. Intersect of A & B = areas of highest priority

© 1997, USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc.

Uses of Institutional Priorities Data

The primary use of the Institutional Priorities Survey results is to pinpoint an action agenda based on consensus of perceptions among all campus constituents, including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and board members. Institutions currently using the SSI indicate they chose to use the IPS to enhance their efforts in the following areas:

- Setting the retention agenda
- Providing feedback to faculty
- Marketing the institution
- Providing feedback to staff
- Providing feedback to administrators
- Strategic planning
- Providing feedback to students
- Preparing self-study for accreditation
- Influencing budget decisions
- Enhancing total quality management
- Providing feedback to board members
- Providing direction to individual departments / majors / programs

Summary

As institutions seek to improve the quality of the educational experience and improve the level of student satisfaction with their programs and services, the involvement of all campus constituents in the assessment process is essential to build an agreement to act.

An approach that compares the priorities of students with those of faculty, administrators, staff, and board members is recommended. Because all constituents have an investment in student satisfaction, they play a key role in setting the future direction of the campus. Institutional priorities that reflect mutual agreement between students and campus personnel have the greatest potential for improving the quality of the campus experience.

For more information:

Contact Julie Hanschman, Program Consultant
USA Group Noel-Levitz
1-800-876-1117
319-337-5274 (fax)
julie-hanschman@noellevitz.com

The Institutional Priorities Survey™ was developed and is published by USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc.

Sample Institutional Priority Survey Items

Importance to me... (1 = not important at all; 2 = not very important; 3 = somewhat unimportant; 4 = neutral; 5 = somewhat important; 6 = important; 7 = very important)		...My level of agreement (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = neutral; 5 = somewhat agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree)
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	Students are made to feel welcome here.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	Faculty care about students as individuals.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	The campus is safe and secure for all students.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	The personnel involved in registration are helpful.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	Academic advisors are approachable.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	Adequate financial aid is available for most students.	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	The content of the courses within each major is valuable. *(four-year version only)*	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	Internships or practical experiences are provided in each degree/certificate program. *(two-year version only)*	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable. *(four-year version only)*	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦

 © 1997, USA Group Noel-Levitz, Inc.